

FICTION

A moving and unpretentious story about the end of a man's life

A Day with Mr. Jules

DIANE BROECKHOVEN

When she finds her husband dead, Alice does not rush to the phone to call the doctor or her son. She wraps Jules in a plaid, and makes plans for lunch. She is willing to relinquish her husband to death if need be, but not to the outside world. In the course of the day she reflects on their marriage, which has now drawn to a close.

A compact, elegiac and atmospheric book

FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG

What Alice does is socially unacceptable. She will have a considerable amount of explaining to do when she calls her son over, but she simply needed one last day with her husband. She discovers an unexpected ally in David, an autistic lad who would come to play chess every day with "Mister Jules". Alice cannot bring herself to turn the boy away: it would push him over the edge, cause a crisis. David does precisely what Alice needs him to do: he acts as if nothing has happened. He sees, of course, that Mister Jules is dead but he sets up the chess game nevertheless and plays against himself. Thanks to David, time genuinely stands still for a moment in the apartment.

'A Day with Mr. Jules' is a touching, convincing novel about the end of a man's life: a worthy "sputtering finale of belching steam".

An unpretentious narrative, full of affection and irony

DER SPIEGEL



AUTHOR



Diane Broeckhoven (b. 1946) is a socially engaged writer. As a journalist she specialises in taboo-busting human-interest stories, that shine through in her fiction.

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